



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge

## Sweetwater Marsh Unit/South San Diego Bay Unit

*Planning Update 5, April 2005*

### Greetings

In our last Planning Update (July 2003), we provided you with a summary of the various alternatives to be evaluated in the Draft CCP/EIS. Since that time, a great deal of planning work has been accomplished, including analyzing the potential environmental consequences of implementing those alternatives. Internal review has been completed and preparations are now being made to finalize the document for public review. The Draft CCP/EIS is expected to be released for public comment in May 2005.

Since July 2003, several changes relevant to the CCP have occurred:

- The refuges in San Diego Bay have been renamed. Sweetwater Marsh and South San Diego Bay are now referred to as Units of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge.
- Waterfowl hunting will not be included as a potential public use in any of the alternatives for the South San Diego Bay Unit.



*The intertidal mudflat and salt marsh habitats included within the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, support over 100 species of migratory seabirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl.*

*Photos: Phil Roullard and USFWS (aerial)*

## San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge *Same Place, New Name*

From 1988 to 2004, we referred to it as the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). When established in 1999, the South San Diego Bay Unit was included as a unit of the San Diego NWR. This all changed in July 2004, when these refuge lands and waters were reorganized into the San Diego Bay NWR. This action was taken to streamline management and facilitate public understanding and recognition of the two refuge areas within San Diego Bay. This change had no affect on the approved refuge boundaries or the current management practices. All that changed was the name. From this point forward, these refuge lands and waters will be referred to as the Sweetwater Marsh and South San Diego Bay Units of the San Diego Bay NWR.

### Inside this update:

Topics Evaluated in Draft CCP/EIS .....	2
Reviewing the Draft CCP/EIS .....	3
Draft CCP/EIS Request Form .....	See Insert
CCP Timeline .....	4
Reviewing Past Planning Updates .....	4

## Habitat Enhancement/Restoration and Opportunities for Public Use are Evaluated in the Draft Plan

The Draft San Diego Bay NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) identifies and evaluates alternative approaches for managing the Sweetwater Marsh and South San Diego Bay Units. The draft plan integrates the draft CCP and draft EIS into one document pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). This integrated document presents alternative management approaches for each Unit. These alternatives range from continuing the current management strategies (the no action alternative) to enhancing and/or restoring habitat to improve conditions for the Federally listed endangered and threatened species and other species supported on the Refuge. Various opportunities for expanding existing public uses and accommodating new wildlife dependent recreational uses are also evaluated.

Examples of habitat enhancement and restoration proposals evaluated in the Draft CCP/EIS include:

- improving tidal circulation within the Sweetwater Marsh Unit by removing old fill areas and adding or replacing tide control structures (Alternatives B and C, Sweetwater Marsh Unit);
- resurfacing the salt pond levees in the South San Diego Bay Unit to increase habitat quality for nesting California least terns and western snowy plovers (Alternatives B, C, and D, South San Diego Bay Unit); and
- restoring tidal action to some salt ponds to facilitate the establishment of salt marsh habitat for light-footed clapper rails and a variety of migratory birds (Alternatives C and D, South San Diego Bay Unit).

Examples of public use proposals evaluated in the Draft CCP/EIS include:

- constructing a 0.4-mile boardwalk along the southern edge of the South San Diego Bay Unit from 7<sup>th</sup> Street to about 10<sup>th</sup> Street in Imperial Beach to accommodate wildlife observation activities (Alternatives C and D, South San Diego Bay Unit);
- realigning the trail system on Gunpowder Point (Sweetwater Marsh Unit) and redesigning the existing interpretive elements provided along the trail to better complement existing and future environmental education programs (Alternative C, Sweetwater Marsh Unit); and
- creating an interpretive nature trail around Pond 28 in the South San Diego Bay Unit (Alternative D, South San Diego Bay Unit).

All of these proposals will be described in detail in Chapter 2 (Alternatives) of the Draft CCP/EIS. Evaluation of the environmental consequences (direct, indirect, and cumulative) of implementing these alternatives, as required by NEPA, will be presented in Chapter 4. Appendix D will describe how the CCP will be implemented once the Record of Decision has been approved.

Once the comment period is closed, the Service will respond to comments and produce a stand-alone Final CCP and Final EIS. Implementation of the CCP would begin following the signing of the Record of Decision. The Final CCP is intended to guide refuge operations, habitat management, and visitor services on the Refuge for the next 15 years.

### Some of the other topics evaluated in the Draft CCP/EIS include:

Coastal wetland restoration	Loss of farmland
Colonial seabird nesting	Management of habitat for brine invertebrates
Recovery actions for listed species	Protection and restoration of migratory bird habitat
Public access within the South San Diego Bay Unit	Predator management issues
Changes to the salt works	New opportunities for wildlife dependent recreational
Flooding concerns	uses such as wildlife observation and interpretation

## Reviewing the Draft CCP/EIS

### How will I know when the Draft is available for review?

Once the Draft CCP/EIS is ready for public review, a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be published in the Federal Register. If you are on our mailing list, you will be notified by mail of the availability of the Draft at about the same time. You will have 60 days from the time the NOA is published to provide your comments.

### What documents will be available for review?

The documents that will be available for public review include: 1) Draft CCP/EIS - Volume I, which presents a detailed description of each of the management alternatives, provides an account of the affected environment, and analyzes the environmental consequences of implementing the various alternatives; 2) Draft CCP/EIS - Volume II (the Appendices), which includes information intended to assist in the review of the document, as well as detailed information about specific topics addressed in Volume I; and 3) Executive Summary, which summarizes the Draft CCP/EIS and emphasizes the major conclusions of the document.

### What options are available for reviewing the Draft?

Documents that comprise the Draft CCP/EIS will be available for review electronically and in print. The printed version of the Draft CCP/EIS consists of three separate documents, as described above. To help save paper and keep costs down, all of these documents will be provided on one easy to use Compact Disc (CD). So that we can manage our costs and order the appropriate quantity of materials, this Update includes a request form (*see the Request Form Insert*) that you can fill out and return, if you would like to receive a CD and/or an Executive Summary. To request the document in print format, contact Victoria Touchstone (contact information below).

Once the NOA is published, you will be able to access all of these documents on our Refuge Complex website, <http://sandiegorefuges.fws.gov> (*Just click the What's New icon*), as well as at the Service's Pacific Region Planning website, <http://pacific.fws.gov/planning/> (*Just click on the Projects Online icon*). Printed material will also be available for review at public locations, including various local libraries, the Refuge Complex Office in Carlsbad, and the Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center (see addresses below).

### Will you remind me again about where I can review the Draft?

When we inform you that the Draft CCP/EIS is available for review, we will once again remind you of where you can review the document. For additional information contact Victoria Touchstone, the Refuge Planner, at [Victoria\\_Touchstone@fws.gov](mailto:Victoria_Touchstone@fws.gov) or at 760-431-9440 ex. 349.

### Public locations where the Draft CCP/EIS will be available for review include:

San Diego Refuge Complex - 6010 Hidden Valley Road, Carlsbad, CA 92009

Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center - 301 Caspian Way, Imperial Beach, CA 91932

Chula Vista Public Libraries

Civic Center Branch - 365 F Street, Chula Vista CA 91910

South Chula Vista Branch - 389 Orange Avenue, Chula Vista CA 91911

Coronado Public Library - 640 Orange Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118

Imperial Beach Library - 810 Imperial Beach Blvd., Imperial Beach, CA 91932

National City Library - 200 East 12th Street, National City, CA 91950

City of San Diego Public Libraries

Central Library, Government Publications - 820 E Street, San Diego, CA 92101

Logan Heights Branch Library - 811 South 28th Street, San Diego, CA 92113

Otay Mesa Branch Library - 3003 Coronado Avenue, San Diego, CA 92154

Paradise Hills Branch Library - 5922 Rancho Hills Drive, San Diego, CA 92139



Salt Marsh  
Bird's Beak



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
**San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex**  
**6010 Hidden Valley Road**  
**Carlsbad, CA 92009**

**First Class Mail**  
**Postage and Fees**  
**PAID**  
**US Department**  
**of the Interior**  
**Permit G-77**

### **CCP Timeline**

<b>May 2005</b>	<b>Publish Notice of Availability for Draft CCP/EIS - Begin Comment Period (60 Days)</b>
<b>July 2005</b>	<b>End Public Comment Period</b>
<b>August/Sept. 2005</b>	<b>Fish and Wildlife Service prepares responses to comments and Final CCP/Final EIS</b>
<b>October 2005</b>	<b>Publish Final CCP and Final EIS</b>
<b>Nov./Dec. 2005</b>	<b>Record of Decision</b>

You can review past Planning Updates by visiting our *CCP* Webpage.  
Go to: <http://sandiegorefuges.fws.gov>. Once at the website, click on "What's New" and then click on "Read the Comprehensive Conservation Plan."

If you would like your name removed from or added to our mailing list, or if you have any questions about the *CCP* planning process, contact our *CCP* Planner by phone (760-431-9440 ex. 349), mail (see above), or email ([Victoria\\_Touchstone@fws.gov](mailto:Victoria_Touchstone@fws.gov)).

Place First  
Class Mail  
Stamp Here

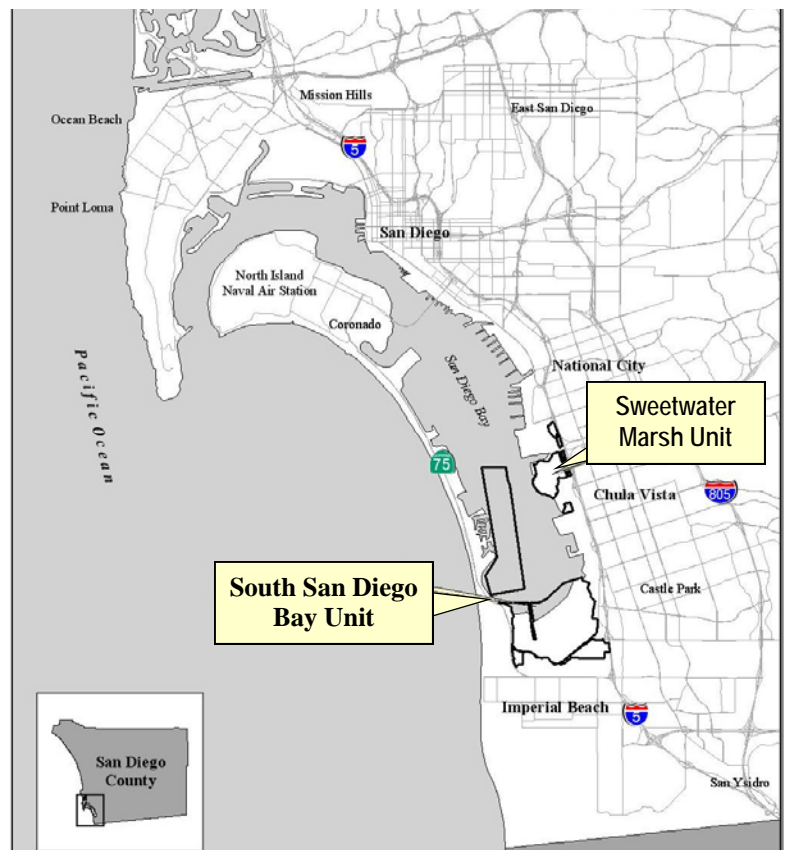
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
6010 Hidden Valley Road  
Carlsbad, CA 92009

(Fold Here)

### Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System

*"To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."*

### Boundaries of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge



## Draft CCP/EIS Request Form Insert

If you would like to receive the Draft CCP/EIS when it is released for public review and comment, please fill out the Draft CCP/EIS Request Form that is provided below. Once completed, fold this insert in a manner that allows the Refuge Complex address to be visible, add a stamp, and mail. If you do not wish to receive any materials for review, there is no need to respond.

To avoid mailing costs, you can also provide this information to the Refuge Planner via email at [Victoria\\_Touchstone@fws.gov](mailto:Victoria_Touchstone@fws.gov) or by FAX to (760) 930-0256.

### DRAFT CCP/EIS REQUEST FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the format preference by checking all applicable boxes:

- ☐ Mail me the CD that includes all of the review materials.
- ☐ Mail me the CD that includes all of the review materials, as well as the printed version of the Executive Summary.
- ☐ I only wish to receive the printed version of the Executive Summary.
- ☐ Do not send me any materials and remove my name from your mailing list.

### **REMINDER**

***All materials will be available in electronic format on the internet and printed materials will be available at various public locations, see page 3 for details.***